

PATTERSON
AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

Registered
Writers Guild of America, East

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT – BATHROOM – DAY.

RICKY LAVENDER, wearing a typical maintenance man's uniform, is busy fixing a bathroom faucet. A Black man about forty, he has a quiet unassuming presence, but is deceptively resourceful and quick thinking with a touch of vulnerability.

The bathroom where he is working is spacious and lavishly decorated. MAXINE HOLLANDER enters. She's a Black woman in her fifties.

HOLLANDER

How you coming along, Mr. Lavender?

LAVENDER

Oh fine. Be finished in a minute.

PHONE RINGS.

HOLLANDER

Excuse me. I'm expecting a call.

Hollander exits.

PERCY HOLLANDER - the son - a man in his late twenties, walks past the bathroom, speaks to Lavender, and then exits through the front door. Lavender hearing him leave, peeks to see where Mrs. Hollander is. When he hears her talking behind a closed door, he sneaks into one of the bedrooms, puts on a pair of gloves and plants a *bugging device* behind one of the nighttables. Whenever Lavender plants this bug, he will be wearing those gloves.

INT. PATTERSON MANAGEMENT OFFICE BUILDING – LOCKERROOM – AFTERNOON.

It's the end of the work day. The maintenance and caretakers at the PATTERSON HILL TOWERS APARTMENTS, a predominately Black luxury housing complex, are in their locker-room preparing to go home.

LAVENDER

(removing bags from his locker)

Got some nice colognes here, gentlemen.

For you or someone you love. Calvin Klein.

Tommy Hilfiger. Giorgio. Boss. Opium.

White Diamonds. Donna Karan. Aramis.

My personal favorite – Armani...

Men begin laughing.

(continued)

What?!

MAN #1

Lavender you always got some
hustle going.

MAN #2

Yeah before you was selling CDs and DVDs.
Then when you had that station wagon, you
was selling bath towels out the trunk.

MAN #3

Yeah then it was candy bars.

LAVENDER

No see, you're wrong about that one.
The candy was fund-raising for my son's
school.

MAN #1

(laughing)

Yeah right! It might have started out that
way, but somewhere along the line you
went into business for yourself.

MAN #4

I remember when you was shampooing
rugs and waxing floors on the weekends.

LAVENDER

Still do. I pick up a lot of bills that way.

MAN #5

Hell I ain't killing myself. I got what I got. I just make due, that's all.

LAVENDER

Yeah but you got to have something to make due with.

MAN #1

Hey last year wasn't you gonna go into a franchise with your cousin?

LAVENDER

Yeah that fell through. You can't depend on Negroes. But I forgot about that. I'm working on something BIG now, really BIG. It's a project that's gonna put me on easy street.

MAN #2

My man Lavender. The Black Lee Iacoca.

Men laugh.

LAVENDER
(laughing)

That's alright. You just keep on laughing. But one day everything's gonna fall into place. I don't know how long it's gonna take, but it's got to happen. Cause one thing's for sure - you'll never have nothing working for somebody else.

Men agree.

(continued)

No matter what you're doing - you could be on Wall St. or in this here locker room and no matter how much they paying you - you can be damn certain you helping somebody else get rich. Most likely somebody who don't even know your name.

MAN #1

And don't want to know it.

LAVENDER

Hello!

INT. MANAGEMENT BLDG. - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

Men are gathered together while MATTHEW CHILDS, a Black man in his late forties, gives out the paychecks. Childs displays effeminate characteristics.

CHILDS

(standing behind podium)

Mr. Eric Tate.

Man #1 gets up and proceeds towards Childs.

Man #3

Why that man have to make such a fucking production out of everything? It's payday. Damn, just give us our shit and let us go.

MAN #2

Every payday I feel like I'm being presented with the Miss America crown and shit.

All laugh.

MAN #4

With his faggot self. He ain't nothing
but a girl anyhow.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - EVENING.

A subway car remains temporarily delayed at a station, its doors remaining open. A young pregnant woman struggles through the car with a toddler and two other small children as well as a large bag. The man she's with walks well ahead of her.

MAN

(to woman)

Hey let's walk to the front.

WOMAN

(screaming)

I can't walk to the front.

I got an infant here and two more
kids and I'm pregnant and you're
walking like you're in a marathon or
something.

The man grabs the infant from her and walks out the nearest open door unto the platform, heading towards the front of the train. The woman steps out onto the platform (leaving the other two children) grabs the child back and steps back onto the train just as the doors are closing. The man, seeing this, angrily leaves the station via the staircase.

DENISE LAVENDER (Lavender's wife) and DOTTIE SMALLS, two Black women each about forty are seated talking and witness the above scene. DENISE, another primary character along with her husband, is a woman who simultaneously exudes both warmth and underlying strength with a fiery undertone. *Think actress Ella Joyce (of the TV series Roc).*

DENISE

Now you see that's why I say
men ain't shit.

DOTTIE

(nodding)

You right about that.

DENISE

You see the way he was acting.
Acting like he wasn't even with her.
And she struggling with all those kids.

DOTTIE

And they probably all his.

DENISE

Thank you. Ain't none of them
any damn good.

DOTTIE

And see that's what he wanted her
to do - get mad and go on by herself
so he could be free to go where ever
he wanted.

DENISE

Yeah, some woman's apartment.

DOTTIE

Thank you.

DENISE

Oh and speaking of that - Dottie
let me tell you what happened to
Peggy the other day. She had to
go to her boss at work to make
some arrangement to get advances
on some of her paychecks.

DOTTIE

Yeah? Why?!

DENISE

To pay the rent.

DOTTIE

What?!

DENISE

Yeah, she had given Larry her half and he was supposed to put it with his half and go down to the housing. Well honey instead of doing that, he took the money and help some slut he been sleeping with get into a new co-op.

DOTTIE

No he didn't.

DENISE

Yes he did. And when I saw Peg in the elevator and she was telling me about it, girlfriend was in tears.

DOTTIE

Oh good Lord I can just imagine.

DENISE

She said they had gotten into trouble before with the housing over the rent being late or whatever, and she was afraid they was gonna throw her and the kids in the streets.

DOTTIE

You know I'm not surprised. That man's done crap like this before.
Why don't Peg just take those kids and leave his sorry black ass sitting right there in that apartment?

DENISE

Dottie where she gonna go?

DOTTIE

I don't know - somewhere, anywhere
I supposed.

DENISE

No she's doing right. She married that
man and had those 4 kids with him.
So dammit make him help feed them.

DOTTIE

I hear you.

DENISE

Now this nonsense that go on
out here don't make no sense.
These women interfere in a
man's home and don't care
who they hurt. It's all about
them.

DOTTIE

That's right. As long as I get mine -
the hell with you.

DENISE

Uh huh.

DOTTIE

And they figure if I don't take
his money, someone else will.
So it might as well be me.

DENISE

Uh huh.

DOTTIE

My sister Pat was having the same trouble with her husband before she left him. She found the woman's address, where she work in this beauty shop, in Clarence's pants pocket and went over there to tell the woman to stay away from her husband.

DENISE

Whaat?!!

DOTTIE

Yes she did. And you know what the woman said? First she ain't even *try* to deny it, and then she said she was sorry but she wasn't gonna give him up.

DENISE

I know you kidding.

DOTTIE

I wish I was. And then she told Pat she had two choices - either share him with her or make trouble and lose what little piece she did have. Cause she was already on shaky ground as it was.

DENISE

Whaat???

DOTTIE

That's what the woman said, I'm telling you. So Pat told her why don't she go find her *own* man. And she said I don't have to - I got *yours*.

DENISE

Lord have mercy.

DOTTIE

Dee now you know if that had been me - that would've just been that bitch's ass or mine one. Cause one of us would've had to got a ass whipping that day. Cause there's no way in this world or the next, I would've let her get away with saying some shit like that to me. Pat wasn't just shacking up with this man. She was married to him. Trifling though he was - she was still married to him. And for this whore to stand there and disrespect her like that - well I would've been going to jail. That's all it is to it.

INT. PERCY HOLLANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Percy and JERRY WATSON, a Black man also in his twenties, are sitting on the bed talking.

HOLLANDER

But I don't love her.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender sits eavesdropping on Hollander's conversation via the bug he's planted. He's grinning and hurriedly jotting things down in a notebook as he listens.

WEDDINGTON

You must love her. You're marrying her.

HOLLANDER

But I don't.

WEDDINGTON

Okay then, tell me why you're going through with it.

HOLLANDER

Because I need a wife. I'll never make partner until I get one; and I'm making partner. Nothing's gonna get in the way. I didn't come this far to blow it now.

WEDDINGTON

This is the year 2019 and the word partner has more than one meaning. And any discrimination on their part should result in a lawsuit – big time!

HOLLANDER

Oh that would be a great way to make partner-sue them!

WEDDINGTON

So then I guess the question is not *how* I fit into your future, but *do* I fit?

HOLLANDER

We just need to be a little more discreet about our relationship. And I need you to be a little more patient.

WEDDINGTON

Patient until when – you develop a spine?

HOLLANDER

What are you saying?

WEDDINGTON

I'm saying you want to run and hide.
And if that's your choice, I'll have
to respect that - as much as it hurts.
But don't ask me to run and hide
with you, cause I won't. I deserve
better than that. Hell, I demand better
than that.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING.

Lavender and Denise are rushing around the apartment preparing to go on a trip to Atlantic City.

DENISE

What time's the bus leave?

LAVENDER

Seven.

Lavender trips over a pile of old newspapers in the corner of the livingroom, nearly falling.

LAVENDER

Lord Dee, why you always hoarding
these old newspapers? Throw them
out.

DENISE

Are those newspapers bothering you?
No. Then don't bother them.
I save them cause you throw them out
and 2 minutes later that toilet overflows
again and water's all over the floor and
nothing to soak it up with.

LAVENDER

Okay fine. And please lower your voice,
the kids still sleep.

DENISE

Just the other night that new girl down
the hall with all those kids - her washing
machine hose broke and she was up
to her ankles in hot steaming water.
Everybody was running with mops and I
was the only one on the floor with some
newspaper.

EXT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING.

Patterson's tenants, management and housing staff, families etc. are assembling and boarding
buses marked destination *ATLANTIC CITY*.

INT. BUS - DAY.

The buses are on their way. JAY RIPPY, a Black man in his fifties, is gossiping and has everyone's
attention, including Lavender's.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

Jay, you're kidding.

RIPPY

No I ain't. You people don't know.
I come in late at night and I see
a lot of things. People may
think they smart, specially some of
those women 'round there but they
ain't fooling nobody - least not me.
There's a lot that goes on in that
complex. Man if the walls could
talk!

FEMALE PASSENGER #2

You know what I heard - that
Claire Dandy who lives in building 1
- well her husband is fooling around
with another woman.

RIPPY

Damn right he is and I know who it
is too. Live right there in Patterson.

FEMALE PASSENGER #3

Who is it, Jay?

RIPPY

You think I'm crazy. I'm not
mentioning any names. I won't have to.
Everybody'll find out sooner or later.

CLOSE ON

Lavender listening closely .

FEMALE PASSENGER #4

Could you just give us a hint?

RIPPY

Well I'll tell you one thing - the girl
he messing with a whole lot younger
than the wife.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

Well I always thought she was too
old for him anyway.

MALE PASSENGER #1

When I first saw them together I
thought he was her son.

MALE PASSENGER #2

Yeah. I did too.

RIPPY

I never could stand her no way. And
when she had that baby for him, she
went round bragging how she done

(continued)

gave him a son and shit. I told her to her face then that one of those young girls right out there was gonna take him way from her. So don't get too used to having him around.

MALE PASSENGER #3

(laughing)

Jay, no you didn't.

RIPPY

Yes I did. I don't pull no punches. She can't stand me and the feeling is mutual.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

Well we'll know who the girl is when she gets pregnant. They always get pregnant.

All agree.

RIPPY

Oh I don't know about that. I'd be mighty surprised if this one got pregnant. And remember it takes a lot to surprise me.

FEMALE PASSENGER #2

Well if you play, you will pay.

RIPPY

Yeah but I got a feeling this one's a little too smart for that.

PASSENGERS

Ohhh.

RIPPY

But I'll tell you somebody's whose not
too smart and no damn good either.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

Who's that?

RIPPY

Our mailman.

MALE PASSENGER #2

Who Griffith? Oh no he's alright.

RIPPY

That man is screwing somebody's
wife right in Building 1.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

Which floor?

PASSENGERS

Aw come on, he's not gonna tell
you that.

FEMALE PASSENGER #1

That's not telling who it is.

RIPPY

Please, no names remember. Doesn't
matter, cause you will surely know when
her husband catch them in his bed and blow
both they brains out.

MALE PASSENGER #3

She sees him in her home.

RIPPY

Damn sure does. That's why the mail's
always so fucked up - people in
Building 1 getting mail belong to people in
Building 3. His mind's not on what he's
doing.

MALE PASSENGER #2

Wait a minute. That helps us figure out
who it is cause there's very few women
in any of the buildings who don't work.

(turning to his wife)

Hey you haven't been working the last
year or so.

Everyone laughs.

WIFE

Honey please. I wouldn't *breathe*
on that mailman. If I was gonna
step out on you, it would be with
something that looked better than that.

RIPPY

You don't strain your brains trying to
figure out who it is. That husband's
gonna come home early one day and
it's gonna be all over. Then everybody
will know.

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The Lavenders have returned from their trip to Atlantic City and are preparing for bed.

DENISE

(laughing)

Damn I lost everything but my drawers.

LAVENDER

Yeah I ain't have no luck either.
But it's okay cause my luck's
not in gambling.

DENISE

See I know where I went wrong.
I was playing with the money I had
won. That's what mama is always
saying - when you win, put that
money to the side. Otherwise you
just give back your luck.

LAVENDER

Oh that's what your mama says, huh?

DENISE

Yeah and another thing she always
saying is never lend anybody any money
and like a fool I gave \$10 to that
Lopez woman.

LAVENDER

Now why in Christ would you do
that?

DENISE

Well cause you *do* work with
her husband and...

LAVENDER

Out of the 40 some guys I work
with, at least 30 of them are married.
You gonna lend all they wives money?

DENISE

No, I was just trying to be nice.
I mean it was almost time to go
back to the bus anyway, and she
said she'd give it back to me when
we got back in the city.

LAVENDER

Honey think about it. If she didn't
have \$10 and it was almost time
to go, how was she gonna have it
when we got back home?

DENISE

Well it doesn't matter any how cause
I'm never going anywhere with
those Patterson people again.

LAVENDER

Why, what's wrong with them?

DENISE

What's wrong with them? Where do
I begin? Except for the ones on
our bus, they all a bunch a stuffy
stuck-up bourgie people who act
like they think they White.

LAVENDER

Ah come on. I hate that. Why is it
that everytime a Black person got
something going for him, he trying to be
White? What *is* that about? Since when
did the word Black become a
synonym for poor? One doesn't
have to have anything to do with the other.

DENISE

Ricky I just could never figure out why
you so obsessed with those people
and what they got. Trust me, they
not really happy.

LAVENDER

They not?! Well shit if they didn't
have me fooled. They sure is hell putting
up a good front.

DENISE

And they so phony. Take this
morning for example, when we
were standing waiting to get on the
bus - they were looking me up and
down like I was from another
planet or something. That Rippy
guy was the only one that was
really down to earth. That's probably
why they don't like him.

LAVENDER

No, they don't like him cause he
talks about everybody and their
business. Look how he was doing
on the bus.

DENISE

Well he wasn't talking to himself.
He had plenty listeners. And some
people deserve to be talked about.

LAVENDER

Now listen honey, listen let's not argue.
It's late. I just want to say that yes I
admire those people live in Patterson.
They got it made. They *living*.
The rest of us just existing. They got security.
They don't have to worry about where
they rent money's coming from. They
kids go to good schools. The guys,
damn they drive late model
luxury cars and buy they wives fur
coats. Full length fur coats! Do you
know what I'd give to be able to
buy you a fur coat.

DENISE

Ricky I don't want a fur coat.

LAVENDER

Yes you do. Every woman does.
And you should have one.

DENISE

Now you gonna tell me what I
want?

LAVENDER

I been wanting to keep this a secret
but baby I been working on this new
project and...

DENISE

No, no you can just stop right there.
I don't want to hear it.

LAVENDER

No listen baby. Let me tell you...

DENISE

Tell me what Ricky? What are you
going to tell me? About a brand
new project as you call it or a
phase 2 of one of your lame-brain
schemes from the past, that I
might add, never seem to work.

LAVENDER

Now that's not fair. If you could
just for once have some faith in me.

DENISE

Ricky I've always supported
 you. I've always been behind
 you ,cause I know you mean
 well. But you got to stop dreaming.
 Face it, baby. The fact is you was born
 poor and in the absence of some
 miracle, you gonna die that way.

LAVENDER

Now that's nonsense. See that's where
 you wrong. If Black people always
 thought like that, we'd still be on some
 (continued)
 plantation picking cotton and running
 round bowing and saying yes massa,
 no massa.

DENISE

Ricky what happened to the
 man I married? You use to value
 the important things. You didn't
 used to worry about stuff like this.

LAVENDER

What happened? I woke up; that's
 what happened. Look at me Dee.
 I'm 43 years old. I been working all
 my life and what I got to show for it?

DENISE

You got a home. You got a wife
 and two children who love you.

LAVENDER

And I love you too. That's why I
 want something better for all of us.
 (pause)

Dee our daughter is in her second
 year in highschool. In two years
 it's gonna be time for her to go to
 college. Now what we gonna
 send her with?

DENISE

A way will be made somehow,
okay.

LAVENDER

Somehow, huh? Baby now you
dreaming.

Lavender walks out of the room. As Denise hangs up his pants, a RED PHONE BOOK falls out the pocket and she briefly looks through the pages before putting it back.

INT. MACDANIEL APARTMENT - DAY.

Lavender is busy in the kitchen and diningroom area moping and waxing the floors. ANN MACDANIEL, a Black woman in her fifties and her daughter ROXANNE MACDANIEL, an attractive woman in her early twenties, are laughing and talking with Lavender from another room.

ANN

Mr. Lavender, it sure is
nice of you to come out on
Sunday and do my floors.
I sure do appreciate it. Some
of Don's people are coming
in from Florida and I do want
everything to be just right.

LAVENDER

No problem.

MACDANIEL

(laughing)

Mama, he wouldn't be doing
nothing else important on a Sunday
afternoon, but laying up sleeping or
watching some ballgame.

ANN

Roxanne!!!

LAVENDER

Don't worry maam, I'm not
paying her no mind.

ANN

Roxanne that wasn't nice. Apologize
to Mr.Lavender.

MACDANIEL

Oh mama I was just kidding him.

LAVENDER
(to MacDaniel)

You know girl, you too much.

MACDANIEL

No, not too much; - actually just
enough.

(b.g.) PHONE RINGS.

MACDANIEL

I'll get it.

MacDaniel rushes off in the direction of her bedroom. A few moments later...

(b.g.) MACDANIEL SCREAMS and runs out of the bedroom.

MACDANIEL

Look there's a mouse in my room.

ANN

What?!!

LAVENDER

What and you afraid?!

MACDANIEL

No this is serious.

(to Lavender)

Go get it for me.

LAVENDER

How am I supposed to get it?!

MACDANIEL

I don't know.

Lavender leaves in the direction of the bedroom.

INT. MACDANIEL BEDROOM - DAY.

Lavender's in the bedroom supposedly searching for the mouse.

MACDANIEL

(b.g.)

Did you find him?

LAVENDER

No I'm still looking.

Lavender plants the bugging device under a nighttable.

INT. MACDANIEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

MacDaniel and DANIELLE, another Black woman in her early twenties, are sitting on the bed talking. MacDaniel is eating from a fruit basket.

DANIELLE

Okay, let's have it. I know you been up to something.

MACDANIEL

I don't know what you mean.

DANIELLE

Spill it.

CUT TO :

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender's eavesdropping and taking notes.

MACDANIEL

Well there is a little secret I been meaning
to share with you.

DANIELLE
(mouth wide open)

What is it? Tell me.

MACDANIEL

Close your mouth and I will.

DANIELLE
(embarrassed)

Oh sorry. Tell me.

MACDANIEL

I met someone.

DANIELLE

Someone?

MACDANIEL

A man.

DANIELLE

A man? Where?

MACDANIEL

Well he lives here in Patterson.

DANIELLE

What building?

MACDANIEL

One, on the 10th floor.

DANIELLE

And?

MACDANIEL

And what?

DANIELLE

Does this man have a name?

MACDANIEL

Of course, he has a name.
You want me to tell you what
it is?

DANIELLE

Ah that would be nice.

MACDANIEL

Gil.

DANIELLE
(pause)

Wait, not Gil Dandy.

MACDANIEL

You got it!

Lavender is grinning, listening and writing things down in his notebook.

CUT TO:

INT. MACDANIEL'S BEDROOM.

MacDaniel picks up a *very large* banana from the fruit basket.

MACDANIEL

(holding banana)

Girl he is soo good in bed. He
is this big!!

DANIELLE

Girl you lying.

MACDANIEL

No I'm not. And he can stay hard
forever.

DANIELLE

Girl you need to stop.

MACDANIEL

The first time we did it, I couldn't
walk for two days.

Both laugh.

DANIELLE

Oh I hate you.

MACDANIEL

Yeah I know, cause you wish it
was you, right?

DANIELLE

Exactly!!

INT. MACDANIEL APARTMENT - DOORWAY - DAY.

LAVENDER

I'm sorry Mrs. MacDaniel I been looking all over the place, but I can't find my watch. I'm sure I left it in your daughter's room yesterday when I was trying to set that mouse trap. Can I take a look?

ANNE

(rushing away)

Okay I don't think it's in there, but you go ahead and take a look. Excuse me, I have something in the oven.

INT. MACDANIEL BEDROOM - DAY.

Lavender retrieves the bug .

ANNE

(b.g.)

Did you find it, Mr. Lavender?

LAVENDER

No, I don't see it here. Can't imagine where I lost it.

INT. MANAGEMENT BLDG. - EMPLOYEE LUNCHROOM - DAY.

LAVENDER

(to co-worker)

Hey man I got a little errand to run. I'll be back. Cover for me, will you?

CO-WORKER

Yeah okay man.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY.

Lavender is attending a book-signing event. The author is seated at the table and Lavender is next in line.

LAVENDER

Uh excuse me Mr. Tate, I work with
your cousin Porter, Ray Porter.

AUTHOR

Oh yes uh Mr.?...

LAVENDER

Lavender, Ricky Lavender.

AUTHOR

Nice of you to come down Mr.
Lavender.

LAVENDER

I wanted to talk to you about an
idea I've got , a project I've been
working on.

AUTHOR

A project?

LAVENDER

Yes, Mr. Tate. You play your
cards right, and I could hand you
the material for your next book.
We would be collaborating on
a tell-tale novel, expose' type
thing. A Peyton Place type book,
based on real people and they're lives.

AUTHOR

Uh Mr. uh Lavender is it?- I don't think...

LAVENDER

Don't say no yet - least not 'til
you understand what you saying
no to. This project could mean
a lot of money in uh - what you call
it - royalties for both of us.

MONTAGE - THE EAVESDROPPING CONTINUES.

A series of cuts showing Lavender planting the bug during the days, sitting parked in his car listening at nights and arriving home late and sneaking into bed.

INT. TENANT #1'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY.

Lavender plants a bug behind the headboard of a bed. He notices the phone and takes time to jot down the number in his RED PHONE BOOK.

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender sits listening and writing.

INT. LAVENDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lavender quietly eases into bed besides Denise, unaware she's only pretending to be asleep.

INT. TENANT #2'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY.

Lavender plants the bug behind the nighttable.

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender sits listening and writing.

INT. LAVENDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lavender quietly eases into bed besides Denise, unaware she's only pretending to be asleep.

INT. TENANT #3'S APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - DAY.

Lavender plants the bug under the coffee table.

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender is listening, but suddenly he stops writing.

TEEN FEMALE

(crying)

But I want to keep my baby.

MOTHER

I'm not about to let you throw
your life away.

FATHER

I know a good doctor who'll be
discreet. He'll take care of it. Thank
God we found out before you were further
along.

FEMALE

What about what I want? Doesn't
anybody care about what I want?

FATHER

Girl will you get some sense in
your head. Don't you know the
mistakes you make now, you'll
pay for the rest of your life?

MOTHER

My God, you with a baby at
17 years old. I can just imagine
what people would say.

FEMALE

I don't care what people think.
I don't care what they say.

MOTHER

Well your father and I do. June, you're
just gonna have to trust us on this one.
We know what's best for you.

FEMALE

I don't want to kill my baby. Can we talk about this?

(b.g.) LOUD CRYING.

FATHER

We just did.

FEMALE

(hysterical)

I want my baby. Please don't do this to me.

Lavender is obviously shaken.

INT. LAVENDER'S BEDROOM – NIGHT.

Lavender eases into bed but lies awake thinking.

MONTAGE ENDS.**INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT – TOSHA'S BEDROOM – DAY.**

Lavender stops by his daughter's room to have a talk with her. He knocks twice on the door. No answer. He pushes the door slightly. It opens and TOSHA LAVENDER, a Black 16 year old girl, is on her bed wearing headphones listening to an IPHONE and reading a magazine.

TOSHA

(looking up)

Oh hi daddy.

LAVENDER

Hi baby girl. How you doin?

TOSHA

Okay.

Lavender sits down on the side of the bed.

TOSHA

What's the matter daddy?

LAVENDER

What do you mean?

TOSHA

You don't hardly never come in my
room.

LAVENDER

(looking around at the mess)

That's because I'm afraid of what's growing
in here.

TOSHA

Oh daddy.

LAVENDER

I just wanted to talk.

TOSHA

Bout what? Am I in trouble?

LAVENDER

I don't know. Should you be?

TOSHA

(non-stop rambling)

No, cause I already told mama that
the other night when I said I was
spending the night at Twanna's house
I really was there but her brother said
I wasn't there when mama called
cause when he got home from that
party he went to me and Twanna was
already in bed.

LAVENDER

No, no it's nothing like that. I just
come in to chat with you.

Tosha eyes him suspiciously.

TOSHA

How come?

LAVENDER

Can't I just come into my daughter's
room and have a conversation?
Find out what's happening in her life?

TOSHA

Yeah I guess so.

LAVENDER

So what's happening in your life?

TOSHA

Well I saw these new jeans that
were the *bomb*, and they would
really look nice on me...

LAVENDER

We'll talk about that Thursday on
payday.

TOSHA
(happily)

Yeah?! Okay.

LAVENDER

But seriously Tosha you know there
ain't nothing you can't tell me or your
mama.

TOSHA

Yeah, okay.

LAVENDER

If you ever have a problem, I don't
ever want you to feel you can't tell
us. Cause we would never force
you to do something- you know-
without at least trying to talk to you and
work it out first... Okay?

TOSHA
(puzzled)

Okay daddy.

LAVENDER

Cause you know we love you right?

TOSHA

Right daddy...Daddy is this one
of those father and daughter moments
that you see on those made-for-TV movies?

LAVENDER
(laughing)

Yeah daughter I guess it is.

TOSHA

White people have those a lot,
don't they?

LAVENDER

Yeah, well us Black folks need to have them too.

TOSHA

Yeah...Hey daddy on Thursday when you get paid, could we also talk about these new shoes I saw in the same store those jeans was at?

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - KITCHEN TABLE - DAY.

It's breakfast time and Lavender, Denise and son MARTIN LAVENDER, a 10 year old boy, are seated at the table eating. Tosha is standing to the side talking on the phone.

DENISE

Okay Tosha, enough with that phone..
Sit down and eat your breakfast.
It's getting cold.

(b.g.) Tosha continues talking.

MARTIN

Hey Dad so when we gonna go get my new sneakers?

LAVENDER

Thursday, after I come home from the job.

MARTIN

Aw right!!!

Martin gets up from the table and leaves.

DENISE

(to Lavender)

You got in late last night.

LAVENDER

Yeah.

DENISE

You been getting in late a lot lately.

LAVENDER

No, not that late.

DENISE

Late enough.

LAVENDER

Well you was asleep. So I didn't want to wake you.

DENISE

Well I've noticed it's been happening a lot lately.

LAVENDER

Dee, is there a point you'd like to make?

DENISE

What's her name?

LAVENDER

What's whose name?

DENISE

Who ever this woman is you spending so much time with?

LAVENDER

Oh Jesus Dee, you got to be kidding.

DENISE

No I'm not kidding. Don't play
me for no fool Ricky cause
I'm not one.

LAVENDER

Honest to God, you got to stop this
paranoid shit. There ain't no woman
involved here. I'm just working late
on some side jobs.

DENISE

You know Ricky, I can read you like
a book - always could. I know when
you lying.

LAVENDER

What I can't seem to figure out is
what woman you think would be
going with me. She wouldn't do it
for nothing. I'd have to be spending
money on her, and everything I
make, I bring here to you and the
kids - everything.

Denise glances over and notices Tosha is still on the phone. She walks over and takes the receiver out of Tosha's hand.

DENISE

Hello Sandy...Yeah dear this is
Tosha's mother...Yeah she has to
go eat her breakfast now. She will
call you back later okay?...And
Sandy dear, please don't call Tosha
asking when she's gonna call you back
okay....Goodbye.

TOSHA

Mama, what's the big deal?

DENISE
(pointing to chair)

Sit.

Martin comes back into the kitchen and reaches on top of the refrigerator to get something. In doing so he accidentally knocks something behind the refrigerator.

MARTIN

Ahh man.

LAVENDER

Wait, I'll get it.

DENISE

No keep eating. I'll get it.

Denise begins pushing the refrigerator to reach what's fallen behind it.

LAVENDER

Dee you can't move that thing.

DENISE

Oh really - you're mistaking my
Brother!

Denise moves the refrigerator and retrieves the item.

TOSHA

I hear that mama.

DENISE
(laughing)
See you forget, I eat my spinach.
I'm Popeye the sailor woman.

INT. PATTERSON PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON.

Lavender is selling a bottle of cologne to maintenance man JOHN PUGH, a Black non-descript man in his thirties. Rippy is also standing there browsing through the samples.

LAVENDER
(to Pugh)
Yeah man I guarantee you she'll
like that.

PUGH

You think so.

LAVENDER

I know so.

LEE DUNBAR , a Black distinguished-looking man in his late forties, walks by with a small suitcase.

LAVENDER

Uh Mr.Dunbar you going away?
I was just on my way up to your
place to fix that closet door.

DUNBAR

No I'll just be gone overnight on business.
My wife will be home. You can go
on up.

LAVENDER

Oh okay then I'll take care of that.

INT. DUNBAR APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON.

When JILL DUNBAR, an attractive woman in her thirties, leaves the room, Lavender stops working on the closet door and plants the bug under a nighttable.

INT. DUNBAR BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Jill is having sex with the mailman NEEL GRIFFITH, a Black man about 40.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender is listening in on the goings-on in the Dunbar bedroom.

JILL

OOooh you're sooo big.
Harder baby, harder!

(b.g.)HEAVY BREATHEING. MOANS. GROANS. RUSTLING OF BED COVERS.

GRIFFITH

OOoo you're soo nice and wet.
Mercy...

Lavender looks up from his notes.

Lavender's POV

of Lee Dunbar parking his car and walking towards his building.

LAVENDER
(grinning)

Oooh damn this is gonna be gooood.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNBAR BEDROOM - NIGHT.

GRIFFITH

Baby what time you expecting MR.Dunbar
home?

JILL

He isn't coming home tonight. He
went out of town on a business trip.

LAVENDER

That's what *you* think.

GRIFFITH

Ohhh, he's out of town.

JILL

That's right, baby.

GRIFFITH

Well let the games begin!

CUT TO:

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

LAVENDER

Damn, what's taking him so long?

CUT TO:

INT. DUNBAR BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Jill and Griffith are oblivious to Dunbar standing in the doorway watching them.

GRIFFITH

Jill sweetheart I think I could spend
the rest of my life right here in this
bed with you.

DUNBAR

THINK AGAIN!!!!

GRIFFITH

Oh shit.

DUNBAR
(to Griffith)
Get your motha fuckin clothes and get
the fuck out of my house for I kill
you.

Griffith hurries out the bedroom. Dunbar remains in the doorway glaring at Jill still in bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

(b.g.)LOUD SLAP.

JILL
(crying)
No Lee wait. Let me explain.

(b.g.)LOUD SLAP. CRYING. LOUD SLAP. SCREAMING. LOUD THUD. LOUD CRYING.

DUNBAR
(yelling)
Explain what Jill? What do you want to explain?

(b.g.)LOUD SLAP

(continuing)
You want to explain to me why you
fuckin the mailman? Huh?
Or maybe you want to explain why
you fuckin him in OUR bed. I told
you before Jill - not to ever let me
catch you. Didn't I?

JILL
(sobbing)
There wasn't anybody before Neäl.
He was the first.

DUNBAR
(screaming)
Don't lie to me, bitch.

(b.g.)LOUD SLAP. FURNITURE IS OVERTURNED.

The bug goes dead. Lavender tries to fix it with no luck, gives up and continues writing his notes.

MOMENTS LATER...

Lavender's POV
of Dunbar leaving the building, getting into his car and driving away.

Lavender continues organizing his notes.

MINUTES LATER...

Lavender's POV
of a body falling from a terrace and hitting the ground.

Screams are heard as tenants look over their terraces to see what caused the loud thud. Some walk over to the body. Lavender also comes over to see.

TIGHT ANGLE ON
Jill Dunbar's face.

TENANT #1

My God, it's Jill Dunbar.

TENANT #2
(yelling out)

Somebody call the police.

TENANT #3

Is she dead?

TENANT #1

From 17 floors up, yeah I think
so.

TENANT #4

Jesus, what happened?

ANGLE ON LAVENDER
as he slips away from the crowd.

INT. HALLWAY - DUNBAR APARTMENT DOOR - NIGHT.

Lavender tries to open the door, but it's locked.

(b.g.)POLICE SIRENS

Lavender leaves by the stairway.

SECONDS LATER...

ANGLE ON PUGH

as he nervously exits an adjacent apartment, locks the door and leaves.

EXT. LAVENDER'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT.

Lavender watches as the police take photographs, control the crowd etc .

LAVENDER'S POV

of Dunbar returning in his car.

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT.

Lavender arrives home, comes over to the couch and sits motionless in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Denise is slowly taking off her clothes, obviously having arrived home just a few minutes before Lavender.

INT. DUNBAR APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT.

The apartment is busy with police milling around dusting for fingerprints etc. Seated on the couch with Dunbar are Detectives BILLY JEWELS and DANI CHERRY. Jewels (about forty) is a gruff, abrasive type who can be intimidating. *If you can picture character actor Clifton Powell in one of his bad-guy scenes, you've got a handle on Jewels.* Cherry, besides being his partner, is also his female counterpart. She's a very pretty woman in her mid to late thirties with a serious expression and a no-nonsense undercurrent to her personality. *Think Shaft's Vanessa Williams.*

CHERRY

Mr.Dunbar we need for you to
take your time and tell us what
happened here tonight.

DUNBAR

Well I guess you heard already
my wife and I had a pretty bad
fight, uh argument, tonight.

JEWELS

No, we hadn't heard that.

DUNBAR

Well we did.. We uh... I uh...

CHERRY

Well Mr.Dunbar why don't you
just take your time and start from
the beginning.

DUNBAR

Well I was supposed to be away at
this conference in Philly but when
I got there, I found out that the
guest speaker had died from
a sudden heart attack. So I stayed
around awhile talking to a few
people I know and then I returned
home. When I came in the
door, I heard voices in the bedroom
so I went back there and I uh I uh
saw Jill in bed with this man.

JEWELS

Did you know the man?

DUNBAR

Oh yeah I know him. He's our
mail carrier.

CHERRY

The mailman?

JEWELS

So what you saying is you came back
home unexpected from a business trip
and caught your wife in bed with another
man.

DUNBAR

Yes that's right.

CHERRY

What happened next?

DUNBAR

Well of course I was angry. I mean
I wasn't surprised that much though.
This isn't the first time my wife has
been unfaithful. It's just the first
time I caught ever... and caught her
doing it in our home... in our bed.
You understand.

CHERRY

Of course. I can just imagine how
you must have felt. So what did you
do next?

DUNBAR

Well I ordered the guy out
and he left. And then I remember
slapping my wife a couple of times.
I was angry.

JEWELS

Where did you hit her?

DUNBAR

I slapped her across the face.
I'm not proud of it, but that's
what I did.

CHERRY

Then what did you do?

DUNBAR

I think I turned over one of the
nighttables by the bed and the
(continued)
lamp fell and broke....and..

JEWELS

Did you hit your wife with anything,
Mr.Dunbar?

DUNBAR

No, I just slapped her with my hand.

JEWELS

A couple of times?

DUNBAR

Yeah.

JEWELS

How many?

DUNBAR

I don't know.

JEWELS

Two? Three? Four?

DUNBAR

I don't know, four maybe. Everything
happened so fast.

CHERRY

Of course. Then what happened?

DUNBAR

Well I was so angry, I just had to get away from her so I just ran out, got in my car and drove around 'til I felt myself in control again.

JEWELS

What condition was your wife in when you left her, Mr.Dunbar?

DUNBAR

My wife was alive, detective. She was crying, but she was very much alive.

CHERRY

Where was she?

DUNBAR

In the bedroom.

JEWELS

How do you think your wife got over that terrace railing Mr.Dunbar?

DUNBAR

I don't know.

CHERRY

Do you think she was capable of suicide?

DUNBAR

No, not Jill.

CHERRY

But you had just caught her in bed
with another man. Maybe that was
just too much guilt for her to live with.

DUNBAR

No, Jill wouldn't kill herself.

JEWELS

Is it possible she could've been
leaning over, gotten dizzy and fallen?

DUNBAR

No, Jill didn't like heights too much.
She hardly ever went out on the
terrace, especially if she was here
alone.

CHERRY

Then that just leaves us with someone
pushing her over.

JEWELS

Murder...Mr.Dunbar, do you know
of anyone who'd want to murder
your wife?

DUNBAR

No, I don't.

JEWELS

Is there anyone who could substantiate
your claim she was alive when you
left?

DUNBAR

No, I don't think so?

JEWELS

Then we have a problem, don't we
Mr. Dunbar?

DUNBAR

I didn't kill my wife, if that's what you're
getting at.. You got to believe
me. She was alive when I left here.
As God is my witness, she was alive.

POLICEMAN

(o.c. from bedroom)

Hey Cherry.

CHERRY

What? I'm busy.

POLICEMAN

(o.c.)

You really need to see this, you *and*
Jewels.

CHERRY

(to Dunbar)

Excuse us a minute.

They enter the bedroom.

JEWELS

(to policeman)

What you got?

Standing over the overturned nighttable, the policeman points out the **bug** to Cherry and Jewels .

CHERRY

Well now what do we have here?

POLICEMAN

State of the art.

CHERRY

Now what do make of this?

POLICEMAN

Well I'm no detective, but it looks to me like the husband suspected something was up with the wife, planted the bug to find out for sure, and then came home to catch her in the act.

JEWELS

(yelling to Dunbar)

Uh Mr.Dunbar could we see you in here please?

Dunbar enters.

CHERRY

(motioning to bug)

Mr.Dunbar, you know anything about this?

Dunbar reaches for the bug.

CHERRY

(stopping him)

No you can't touch it. It hasn't been dusted.

DUNBAR

Well what is it?

CHERRY

It's a bug, Mr.Dunbar.

DUNBAR

A bug? (pause) You mean so
somebody can listen in?

CHERRY

Exactly.

JEWELS

You have any idea how it got under
your nighttable?

DUNBAR

No I've never seen it before.

JEWELS

Are you sure?

DUNBAR

What do you mean am I sure?
Of course I'm sure. I think I'd
remember something like this.

CHERRY

Do you know who could've planted
it?

DUNBAR

No.

CHERRY

(suspiciously)

Mr.Dunbar, if there's something
you want to tell us...I mean maybe
you'll feel better if you get things
off your chest.

DUNBAR

There's nothing more I can tell you.
I don't know anything about this
bug and I didn't kill my wife. You
got to believe me - I didn't do it.

MONTAGE - THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES...

Neighbors are being questioned by Jewels and Cherry.

INT. NEIGHBORS #1'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Three Black middle aged women (matronly type) occupy this apartment.

CHERRY

(entering with Jewels)

Sorry to wake you up folks. There's
been a death and we're investigating...

FEMALE #1

You mean Jill Dunbar next door.

CHERRY

(taking notes)

Yes that's right. I need to know what
you ladies heard, if anything.
It's just the three of you living
here, correct?

FEMALE #1

Yes detective that's correct.

FEMALE #2

You want to know if we heard who killed her?

JEWELS

Okay, what makes you think she was *killed*?

FEMALE #3

Well somebody pushed her off her terrace, right? I mean she didn't jump right?

CHERRY

Actually that hasn't been determined yet.. That's why we're investigating. So which one of you ladies would like to start? All three of you been here all evening, right?

FEMALE #1

Yes we had met at this store after work to go shopping...

FEMALE #2

We have the receipts if you want to inspect them.

CHERRY

Oh no, that won't be necessary.

FEMALE #1

So we got home around 8.

FEMALE #3

Yes 8 o'clock and as we were unlocking our door, we uh...

FEMALE #1

We saw Mr.Griffith come up to the Dunbars' door and ring the bell and then Mrs.Dunbar let him in.

FEMALE #2

Mr.Griffith is our mail carrier. It use to be you just called those people mail*men*, but today to be politically correct and not offend anyone and since women are delivering the mail also, we refer to them as mail *carriers*.

CHERRY

Uh yes maam. Okay then what happened?

FEMALE #3

Well we didn't really hear anything else until 10 o'clock when her husband came home.

JEWELS

How can you be sure about the time?

FEMALE #1

The 10 o'clock news was coming on?

CHERRY

Okay so the husband came home and then what?

FEMALE #1

He must've caught them in...you know...
In the act because he started yelling and
using all this profanity.

JEWELS

Then what?

FEMALE #2

Well Mr.Griffith left. I know because
I saw him out the peephole.

CHERRY

After Mr.Griffith left, what did Mr.Dunbar
do?

FEMALE #1

He was still yelling and cursing. I
think he slapped her...
(turning to # 3)
a couple of times.

FEMALE #3

Yes he did slap her. And we heard her
crying. And some furniture was knocked
over or something.

JEWELS

And...?

FEMALE #1

And that was it.

CHERRY.

What do you mean that was it?

FEMALE #2

That was it, because he left then.
We heard him slam the door.

FEMALE #1

Yes and he yelled that she better
be gone when he got back. He
yelled that as he was leaving down
the stairs. He was too angry to even
wait for the elevator.

CHERRY

Okay now this is very important
ladies, very important - other than
him yelling that she'd better be gone -
was there any other indication that she
was still alive when he left?

All three look confused and nervously at one another.

FEMALE # 1

What do you think he killed her?

CHERRY

I want to know if there was anything you
heard after he left that would cause you
to assume she was still alive.

FEMALE #1

You mean did we still hear her moving
around in the apartment?

CHERRY

Precisely!

FEMALE #3

Well sure. I remember this phone call
she got. I mean the phone rang and

(continued)

she picked it up and said hello, hello a couple of times and I guess whoever it was didn't say anything because she slammed the phone back down.

FEMALE #1

Yes that's right. And then a few minutes later...

(turning to #3)

while you was taking your bath sistah, the phone rang again.

CHERRY

And she hung up again?

FEMALE #1

No she said something like yeah I been sleeping with him. Maybe if you had been more exciting in *your* bed, he wouldn't be over here in mine.

FEMALE #2

Oh yes Mrs.Dunbar was certainly a vulgar, loose woman.

FEMALE #3

Sistah, it's not nice to speak ill of the dead.

JEWELS

And then what happened?

FEMALE #1

Yeah and then she was quiet for a few seconds as if she was listening to the caller talk and then she said something to the effect that - well I'm sorry you can't do anything about it. And then she slammed the phone down.

CHERRY

Ladies this conversation has been
extremely enlightening. Extremely.
So what happened after that?

FEMALE #3

Well it got quiet so we went to bed, and
we woke up when we heard the police
sirens and the commotion next door.

FEMALE #1

Oh yeah there was one more thing.
A few minutes after that I could've
sworn I heard someone ring their
doorbell, but when I went and looked
out the peephole, I didn't see anybody.

INT. NEIGHBOR #2'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

A young married couple occupies this apartment.

JEWELS

So you've lived under the Dunbars
how long now?

HUSBAND

Since we moved here a year ago.

CHERRY

How well did you know the deceased
and her husband?

HUSBAND

Not well at all. I mean we'd see
them in the elevator or by the pool
or something like that.

WIFE

(fidgeting)

You know...no never mind.

CHERRY

You wanted to say something Mrs.

(checks notes)

uh Fontaine?

WIFE

Nooo.. No I don't. It's just kinda
funny you know. I heard people
in the hallway saying her husband did
it cause he caught her with another man.

CHERRY

What's funny about that?

WIFE

Well she's fooled around before and
he knew about it cause I've heard
the two of them arguing about
it.

HUSBAND

Yeah, but that's not the same as getting
caught in your own home.

WIFE

Well maybe he never caught her in
the house, but she'd done it there
lots of times before.

CHERRY

How do you know?

WIFE

Well because a couple of times I heard her in the bathroom - you know- doing it . And she'd be groaning and moaning about how big the guy was and all that They must have been on the floor or something... Well anyway I've seen her husband by the pool in a swim suit - a wet swimsuit- and he didn't look like he could cause a woman to respond like that.

HUSBAND
(embarrassed)

Toni!

WIFE

Well I'm just trying to explain it to the detective.

CHERRY

Uh Mrs.Fontaine did this guy have a name?

WIFE
(laughing)

Yeah, *Oooh Baby*.

INT. NEIGHBOR #3'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

FEMALE

I wish you policemen had responded this quickly last week when my apartment got burglarized. I guess it takes something as important as a murder to get your attention. Right?

MALE

Yeah and it had to be an inside job too, cause they didn't break in. But nobody cares about that, right?

MONTAGE ENDS.

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING.

DENISE

Ricky, what's the matter? You
tossed and turned all night.

LAVENDER

Dee, I didn't tell you everything
last night.

DENISE

Okay...What did you leave out?

LAVENDER

Baby I think I went too far this
time. I think I'm fucked. But I wanted
this. I wanted this soo bad, I could taste
it. This plan was perfect - dammit it was
so perfect.

DENISE

Ricky what are you talking about?

LAVENDER

(handing over notebook)

Just look at all the dirt I was getting
on those people. This was gonna be
a what you call those books... a bestseller.
That's what it was gonna be - a bestseller.

DENISE

(looking at notebook)

What is this Ricky? How did you
find out all this?

LAVENDER

I bugged the apartments.

DENISE

YOU WHAT!!!

LAVENDER

I bugged the apartments.

DENISE

What bug? Where did you get
a bug?

LAVENDER

My man Clarence hooked me up
with this place called THE SPY STORE.

DENISE

Your man Clarence. Now there's a law
abiding citizen. When did you have time
to do this? How???

LAVENDER

When I was on calls. I just slip and
plant the thing, and then make up
some excuse to go and get it back
so I could take it and plant it in the
next place. It was so easy.

DENISE

Ricky, you have lost your mind.
This time you have really lost it.
Don't you know bugging people's
apartments is against the law?
...(pause) Is this what **you** was
up to when you was coming in
all those late hours?

LAVENDER

Listen Dee, ain't nobody ever got
ahead without cracking a few eggs.

DENISE

And just where did you plan to write
this *bestseller*, from a prison cell?

(pause)

Ricky, what did you mean when you
said you think you're fucked?

LAVENDER

If they find that bug - they gonna
find that bug - and if they trace it
back to me, I'm in trouble.

DENISE

What do you mean if they find it?
Why would they find it? Where did
you leave it?

LAVENDER

In the Dunbar bedroom.

DENISE

WHY???

LAVENDER

I couldn't get it back after she
was killed. The door was locked
and the police was coming.

DENISE

Ricky, why couldn't you tell me what
you were up to. I'm your wife dammit.

LAVENDER

I tried to tell you the other night.
You threw up your hands. You
didn't want to know nothing about
it. Remember? (pause)
Dee, I don't know what I'm gonna do.

DENISE

I don't know either. What I DO know
is I told you something like this was
gonna happen. You and your BIG
ideas.

LAVENDER

Dee I don't want to hear it. I don't
want to hear I told you so. I don't
want to hear that. I'm in deep shit
here. You understand.

DENISE

True that, as the kids say!
So you heard it when that woman
was killed?!!

LAVENDER

No something happened to the bug
by then. It had gone dead. The husband
must've knocked over the nighttable
where I planted it or something.
(pause) I wish I had heard something.
Maybe somehow I could've done
something to help her, to save her -
I don't know. Poor woman deserved better
than that. To die like that. It just wasn't
fair.

DENISE

Please don't make that woman out like
she was some saint. She was cheating
on her husband in they own bed.
I'm sorry, you can't get any lower than
that.

LAVENDER

So you saying she deserved to die
because of that?

DENISE

No I'm just saying what you do to
people comes back to you, that's
all.

INT. POLICE PRECEINT – MORNING.

At the police station Jewel's and Cherry's desks face one another. Cherry is seated at her desk doing paperwork when Jewels arrives. He walks over and casually tosses a business envelope down in front of her. Opening the envelope and pulling out the contents, she holds Divorce Papers in her hands.

CHERRY

What are you, O for 3 now?
Face it Billy, it is time you resigned
yourself to a life as the lone ranger.

JEWELS

I'm glad you're so amused, especially since
Evette claimed you were one of the reasons
she bailed on our marriage.

CHERRY

Excuse me? What do I have to do with
you and your wife?

JEWELS

She simply refused to believe there was nothing
going on between us.

CHERRY

Now that's ridiculous.

JEWELS

Dani, everybody isn't as enlightened as you are.
A lot of folks still think a man can't work closely
with a woman without putting the moves on her -
especially a woman who looks like you.

CHERRY

That's bullshit.

JEWELS

Hey, her words - not mine.

CHERRY

And what do you think?

JEWELS

I think I'm smart enough to know when not
to *say* what I think.

CHERRY

Thank goodness nobody else around here is afflicted
with that dinosaur mentality.

JEWELS

Oh really?! Earth to Dani. Earth to Dani. Come in.
It amazes me how you can be such a good cop
and yet totally doze on the important shit.

CHERRY

Come again?

JEWELS

When they first put us two together, they never
thought we'd last as partners.

CHERRY

You're kidding. Then why...

JEWELS

The plan was we would do each other in, and they would laugh and watch us doing it. You were the ice princess I would finally be the one to melt. I was the by-the-book cop always keeping his nose clean who would cave into temptation and succumb to your charms. Then someone would drop a dime and the Department would force the Captain to separate us. You know the rule.

CHERRY

I'm in shock.

JEWELS

I'm telling you from the day we met, the guys have been taking bets on how long it would be before we got *busy*. At every New Year's Eve party, the word has been *Is this the year?*

(caresses his suit jacket)

How do you think I've been paying for these new suits?

Cherry, in mock anger, picks up something and throws it at Jewels.

INT. NEIGHBOR #4'S APARTMENT - MORNING.

An older Black married couple occupies this apartment.

WIFE

Yes I was sitting out here on the terrace and her body fell right past me.

Cherry and Jewels are both taking notes.

CHERRY

You know you're about the 4th person that's made a reference to her *body* falling. What I mean is why wouldn't you say I saw *her* falling?

HUSBAND

Cause she had to be dead already
or unconscious one before she went
off that terrace.

JEWELS

Oh why is that?

HUSBAND

Because she didn't scream as she
was falling.

JEWELS

Yeah so, I don't understand what
that has to do...

HUSBAND

There's only one of three things
that could've happened here,
1 - she committed suicide, 2 -she
fell over accidentally or 3 - she was
thrown over. Right?

CHERRY

So what if she committed suicide,
she would purposely be trying to
take her own life and wanting to die,
so why scream?

HUSBAND

Detective uh Cherry, is it?

CHERRY

Yes?

HUSBAND

Detective Cherry I've been in hospital administration for 21 years and I've seen suicides before. Believe me the jumper may want to die, but once he or she takes that final step and he knows there's no turning back - he screams. He always screams.

EXT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - MORNING

A small crowd of Patterson tenants and maintenance staff have gathered discussing the death.

RIPPY

The husband did it.

TENANT #1

No Jay, I don't believe that.

RIPPY

Read my lips. The husband did it.

TENANT #2

No Dunbar doesn't look like a murderer.

RIPPY

Oh really. Exactly what does a murderer look like?

(pause)

Try and stay with me, people - the wife and the mailman thought the husband would be away all night so they was taking care of business, to put it delicately. The husband unfortunately walks in on them. Tells the boyfriend to hit the road. Beats the wife up. Things get out of hand and over she goes. Maybe they was struggling and got too close to the

(continued)

railing. Maybe he slapped her and she fell over backwards.

TIGHT ANGLE ON

Lavender standing nearby listening.

STAFF PERSON #1

No but if she'd fell over like that she would've screamed or something on her way down.

STAFF PERSON #2

Yeah people say they just saw this body falling and then it hit the ground.

RIPPY

Fine, so he hit her too hard and she fell and hit her head. She was dead then or at least the husband thought she was. So he panics and throws her off the terrace to make it look like an accident or suicide. Either way, he did it. He knows it. The police know it. I know it. And may I remind you all I told you this was gonna happen. But he'll get off. Plead temporary insanity or crime of passion. He can get himself a good lawyer and he'll get off.

All nod in agreement.

TENANT #3

Yeah I remember you said it the other day on the bus, but wait a minute if he was trying to make it look like a suicide, why didn't he write a suicide note or something?

CROWD

Yeeeah??

RIPPY

So this is the guy's first murder -
he's bound to forget something.

ANGLE ON

Lavender walking away.

INT. NIGHT CLUB – NIGHT.

A skeptical-looking Cherry and three female officers from the station are seated at a table drinking.

OFFICER #1
(looking around)

Stopping by this Sports Bar was a stoke of
genius. Wall to wall men.

OFFICER #2

I think I've died and gone to heaven.

OFFICER #1

Dani don't look but this guy standing over
there with the stripe shirt has been eyeballing
you since we sat down. I think he's undressing
you with his eyes.

CHERRY

Quick, hand me my jacket.

OFFICER #2

No he looks like he might have potential.
Worth taking a closer look at.

OFFICER #1

How about I send a drink over and ask him
to join us?

CHERRY

How about you don't.

OFFICER #1

I'm trying to hook you up.

CHERRY

Please don't help me. Why don't I just live vicariously through you three and your *sexcapades*.

OFFICER #2

That's a plan. But a better one would be for you to get out more and meet people.

CHERRY

What are you talking about? I meet plenty of people.

OFFICER #1

You meet plenty of perps.

CHERRY

Same thing.

OFFICER #3

I don't think Dani needs to go out and meet anybody.

CHERRY

Thank you Dot.

OFFICER #3

Don't thank me yet. I'm not finished.
The reason why I don't think you need to go out and meet anybody is because what you really want and more importantly, what you really need has been standing right beside you for the past five years.

OFFICER #1

You talking about Jewels?

OFFICER #3

BAM!

CHERRY

Alright, hold it right there, sister. Slam on the brakes. And to think for half a second there you were actually making sense. Where did that come from?

OFFICER #3

Dani look at us and swear there's nothing there between you two. No attraction. No twinge of desire. Something! Say when you're alone working late or when you're out cruising and he reaches over to get something out the glove compartment and his hand accidentally brushes your knee or your thigh.

CHERRY

You ladies have got to stop downloading that porno crap. Your libidos have taken on lives of their own.

OFFICER #1

Girl if you only just admit it – if only to yourself- you'll feel better.

CHERRY

Now pay attention so I won't have to repeat myself. There is nothing between Billy and me, but friendship. It's a close friendship yeah, but *just* a friendship.

OFFICER #2

But some of the best relationships begin between friends.

CHERRY

We are also partners. And...

OFFICER #1

Is that partners in every sense of the word?

CHERRY

No, that's partners in the police work sense of the word.

OFFICER #2

How long you two been partners?

CHERRY

It'll be five years in a couple of weeks.

OFFICER #3

Can I say something?

CHERRY

Can I stop you?

OFFICER #3

Steph is right. Some of the best relationships begin between friends.

CHERRY

Things are great between Billy and me just the way they are.

Officer #3

But they could be so much better the way they *aren't*.

CHERRY

See I know what's going on here. You guys want something to happen so you can win that bet.

OFFICER #1

Bet? What bet?

CHERRY

Yeah bet? You heard me. I didn't stutter.

OFFICER #2

Oh you know about that, huh?

CHERRY

Yeah, I know about that. All three of you are cold-busted. So just talk to the hand.

All laugh.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY.

Cherry and Jewels have tracked down the Griffith (the mail carrier) apartment and are trying to gain entrance.

They ring the doorbell.

(o.c.) Who is it?

CHERRY

Uh Mrs.Griffith we're detectives
Cherry and Jewels from the 77th
Preceint. We'd like to speak with
you and your husband.

BETTY GRIFFITH opens the door. She's a Black woman in her forties. Cherry and Jewels enter as Neel Griffith comes into the room from another part of the apartment.

GRIFFITH

Uh honey, you can go on shopping.
They're here to see me. Something
happened on the job.

CHERRY

Well no actually we're here to
see both of you.

GRIFFITH

Uh can I speak with you officers in
the hallway for a second?

The three walk back out into the hallway.

GRIFFITH

I guess you already know 'bout me
being there when Dunbar came in. But I
left in a pretty big hurry (smile) so I
don't know anything about what
happened after I was gone.
And my wife doesn't know
anything about this matter at all and
uh I'd like to keep it that way,
if you know what I mean.

CHERRY

Believe me, we understand where
you're coming from and we'd like to
help you, but we have to speak to
the both of you.

GRIFFITH

But believe me officers I love my wife
Jill was the first time I stepped out
on her. I wouldn't do it again.

JEWELS

Mr.Griffith this ain't nothing personal.
We don't give a shit who you're screwing
or how often.

(to Cherry)

Do we?

CHERRY

No!

JEWELS

(continuing)

See. We're just trying to conduct a murder investigation here. I'm sorry if you're gonna get smoked in the process, but it could be worse. You could've gone off that terrace with your friend.

CHERRY

Your involvement in this case has unfortunately and inadvertently involved you wife. I'm sorry. Now we can wait outside here a few minutes if there's something you need to discuss with your wife before we talk to her.

GRIFFITH

Okay.

Griffith re-enters the apartment.

(o.c.) LOUD ANGRY MUFFLED VOICES. LOUD SLAP.

CHERRY

(laughing)

Ouch, I felt that.

JEWELS

Poor son-of-a-bitch.

A few minutes later Griffith opens the door and lets the detectives in.

MRS.GRIFFITH

(to detectives)

Please won't you have a seat.

CHERRY

Uh Mrs.Griffith, since you're on your way out, why don't we start with you.

MRS.GRIFFITH

It's alright. I got all the time in the world. Seems like if you hadn't come along, I wouldn't know what's going on in my own home.

CHERRY

Well I don't know how much your husband has told you but...

MRS.GRIFFITH

(glaring at Griffith)

You mean other than being caught in bed with some woman.

CHERRY

Uh yeah Mrs.Griffith we uh Det.Jewels and I can assume from your reaction that this is your first knowledge about your husband's dealings with the victim.

MRS.GRIFFITH

Yes you *can* assume that.

CHERRY

We ask because we've questioned neighbors and they recall hearing Mrs.Dunbar arguing with someone over the phone shortly before her death.

MRS.GRIFFITH

Well okay, but I don't see what that has to do with me.

CHERRY

Well the neighbors were pretty certain about what they heard, and what they heard was Mrs.Dunbar obviously talking to the wife or girlfriend etc. of a man she was seeing. And since as far as we can ascertain, your husband was the only man she was seeing - well Mrs.Griffith surely you can see why that brings us to you.

MRS.GRIFFITH

This is a nightmare. I just know if I sit here a minute, I'm gonna wake up and realize none of this is really happening.

CHERRY

Mrs.Griffith I have to ask you where you were last night at the time Jill Dunbar died.

MRS.GRIFFITH

What you mean last night? I was here at home.

CHERRY

Was anyone with you?

MRS.GRIFFITH

No I was here alone. The kids are at camp.

CHERRY

Maybe someone came to the door. A neighbor, maybe? Did someone call you on the phone?

MRS.GRIFFITH

No nobody.

(turning to Griffith)

I don't believe this. You hot ass horny bastard. Because of you hoe hopping around, the police think I murdered some woman I don't even know. I could kill *you*.

JEWELS

Please Mrs.Griffith, don't misunderstand- we're not accusing you or anybody else *yet*. We're investigating.

CHERRY

Now Mr.Griffith can you start from the beginning for us? You were uh with Mrs.Dunbar and her husband came in unexpectedly? First how long were you two seeing one another?

GRIFFITH

A couple of months.. Maybe 6...Yeah 6.

CHERRY

To your knowledge, had Mrs.Dunbar been in the habit of seeing other men?

GRIFFITH

Well I wasn't the first. I know that.

CHERRY

Did she indicate her husband knew what had been going on?

GRIFFITH

Yeah he knew, but he put up with it.

JEWELS

And why would he do that?

GRIFFITH

Cause he couldn't ...uh satisfy her
and I guess he knew if he made
noise bout her seeing other people,
she'd walk out on him. He couldn't
divorce her mostly cause he couldn't
risk the scandal - him being a big shot
Congressman and all.

JEWELS

Satisfy her? How you mean?

MRS.GRIFFITH

I've heard enough of this.

Mrs.Griffith gets up and leaves the room.

GRIFFITH

Between the sheets is what I mean. He
couldn't satisfy her in bed and I guess
he knew it so he closed his eyes when
she went elsewhere.

JEWELS

So I take it Mrs.Dunbar was very
demanding as far as that was concerned?

GRIFFITH

Man she was insatiable. She couldn't
get enough. (grinning)
(lowering voice)

I had to take vitamins myself to keep up
with her.

JEWELS

I see.

CHERRY

Which one of them had the money?

GRIFFITH

What money?

CHERRY

In the marriage, who had the money?

GRIFFITH

He did.. I mean does.

CHERRY

So she would've been the one to lose
in a divorce.

GRIFFITH

He would not have divorced her. It would not have
hurt him politically and anyway she had
that man wrapped around her little
finger. He loved her dirty underwear.
He put up with her having uh friends
cause like I said, he wasn't enough
for her - I 'm not sure any *one* man
could've been.

CHERRY

I see...(pause) You're quite sure
about this, are you?

GRIFFITH

Yeah I'm sure.

CHERRY

Mr.Griffith where did you go when
you left the Dunbars?

GRIFFITH

I came home.

CHERRY

Oh so you can provide your wife
with an alibi.

GRIFFITH

Well I didn't come straight home.
I stopped at this place I know and
had a couple of drinks. But when I
got here, she was here like she
said. Officers my wife ain't capable
of killing anyone- (smiling) well except me.

INT. POLICE PRECEINT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY.

Cherry and Jewels are discussing the case with their Captain, DANNY PRICHARD, a Black man
about 50.

PRICHARD

Means, motive, opportunity -
talk to me fellas. Who killed
Jill Dunbar?

JEWELS

The husband.

CHERRY

No, I'm not convinced he's
the one.

PRICHARD

Well what you got so far?

CHERRY

The pathologist was sure the fall killed her, but she had sustained a head injury before she went over the terrace, so she'd probably been knocked unconscious. There was blood on the corner of the coffee table in the living-room - her type - so whether she fell on her own or somebody pushed her, she must have hit the table and was knocked unconscious. The murderer must have thought she was dead, panicked and threw her off the terrace.

JEWELS

The husband.

CHERRY

Billy, we don't know that for sure.

JEWELS

The husband caught her in bed with another man. Even though he knew she fooled around, he had never caught her before. So he catches her. He loses it. He hits her a little too hard. - Remember he admitted he hit her a couple of times. So he hits her. She falls and hits her head. He thinks she's dead. He panics and throws her over.

CHERRY

Ohh no, it's not nearly that black and white. What about all these loose ends?

PRICHARD

Loose ends?

CHERRY

The next door neighbors verified
she was alive when he left.

JEWELS

He could've come back.

CHERRY

What about that phone call - probably
from some angry wife or girlfriend?
Who was that?

JEWELS

Doesn't matter. Doesn't have any
bearing on the case.

CHERRY

It might. And then those same ladies
thought they heard somebody ring
the Dunbars' doorbell.
If they did hear somebody, who was it?
That could be our murderer.

JEWELS

One of them said she *thought* she
heard the doorbell. She admitted
she wasn't sure.

CHERRY

And what about those line patterns
in the rug leading to the terrace?

JEWELS

Meaning?

CHERRY

Meaning somebody drug that woman's body across the livingroom slowly and then struggled getting it over the terrace wall. The husband would not have had no trouble picking her up.

PRICHARD

What's this business about that bug under the nighttable?

CHERRY

That's the biggest loose end.

JEWELS

The husband planted the bug.

CHERRY

No...No he didn't. I mean come on there must have been 20 people told us he didn't have to. He already knew what she was doing. I don't believe he even knew about the bug . He looked more surprised than anybody when we showed it to him.

JEWELS

How else was he gonna look?

CHERRY

Okay you say he planted the bug, right?

JEWELS

I'd bet my life on it.

CHERRY

Then why weren't there any fingerprints on it?

JEWELS

What you talking about?

CHERRY

The bug was clean. Why would it be clean if Dunbar planted it in his own home? He wouldn't have any need to wipe it clean or conceal who it belonged to if it was found.

JEWELS

He would if he wanted to cover up a murder.

CHERRY

But that would mean the whole thing was planned; and if it was, he's not that stupid - he would not have done a much better job of covering his tracks. The way this is now - it points straight to him.

PRICHARD

I don't believe he planned it. He couldn't know the guy who was supposed to speak at the seminar was gonna die. And he did show up - we checked that, right.

CHERRY

Right.

PRICHARD

I'm suspicious about this bug myself. I mean if he was trying to catch her, that night he knew how far away he was gonna be driving. He would not have

(continued)

been way too far out of range to hear anything that was going on in that bedroom. He had to know that.

JEWELS

Okay so if the husband didn't plant the bug, who did?
What would anybody have to gain by doing that?

CHERRY

What if somebody wanted to blackmail the wife?

JEWELS

But the husband already knew what was going on.

CHERRY

Maybe the blackmailer didn't know that.

JEWELS

C'mon, Dani please stop trying to make this more complicated than it has to be...Captain, my call is Voluntary Manslaughter - he killed her in a heat of passion. Simple as that.

PRICHARD

Nah Billy, Dani's right. There are too many loose ends here. Something's fishy. I can feel it. Plus anyhow we can't take this to the DA, not like this. Too many unanswered questions. You know they always want this nice little neat package handed to them in they laps. You keep checking. Dani you said before the ladies in the next apartment said the Dunbar woman

(continued)

hung up on whoever called her after
the husband left?

CHERRY

Yeah that's right.

PRICHARD

Now how do we know the mailman's
wife didn't make that call?

CHERRY

I don't believe she did; but if it
was her, she didn't call from home.
We already checked that.

PRICHARD

So try and find out who did call.
If the victim was sleeping with someone else
other than the mailman, we need to
know who that someone was.
And this bug business....
I'm thinking whoever planted that bug
had something to do with the murder.
Maybe the person's plan was to
blackmail the wife, you know her
being a Congressman's wife and all.
But when he *or she* made their move
on Mrs. Dunbar, she told them to get
lost and that person didn't like that.
If that person didn't do her in, they
were probably listening and know who
did. Find the bug and you'll find the
killer.

KNOCK at the DOOR

PRICHARD

Come in.

KNOCK at the DOOR

PRICHARD
(louder)

Come in.

KNOCK at the DOOR

PRICHARD
(even louder)

I said come in!

JEWELS
(moving toward the door)
Somebody's being a wise ass.

Jewels swings open the door. VINCENTE PORTES, a handsome man in his forties, stands laughing.

JEWELS

Vince!
(hugging Portes)
Dawg! I ain't seen you in years.
Where you been?

Prichard also comes over to greet Portes.

PORTES

Don't hate me for selling out, but I'm with I-A
now.

CHERRY

Internal Affairs.

JEWELS

Oh I'm sorry. Vince meet my partner Dani Cherry.

Portes shakes Cherry's hand and pauses to admire her.

PORTES

It's a pleasure.

JEWELS

Dani this is Vince Portes. He was my first partner out of the Academy. I told you.

CHERRY

Yeah.

PRICHARD

Man I never figured you for that I-A crowd.
The *police* police.

Portes had motions that he's making a lot more money.

PRICHARD

I hear you!

JEWELS

So why you down here slummin'?

PORTES

Working on a case for a couple of weeks.

JEWELS
(to Prichard)

Oh oh, get the shredder. Lose those files.
You know the ones.

PORTES

No this station is clean. They never found anything on you guys and believe me they looked.
No I have to go through your back files. Some narcotics cases your people worked on with guys at the One-Nine.

PHONE RINGS and Prichard answers.

JEWELS

(to Portes)

Man we gotta get together. Get some brews and chill.

PORTES

Just name the time and place.

(turning to Cherry)

And make sure Dani's free that night.

CHERRY

No thanks. Three's a crowd.

PORTES

Not when the third person looks like you.

JEWELS

Hey man, I'm warning you. My partner has *three* pieces and a Black Belt.

PORTES

Ooh I like dangerous women.

CHERRY

The way I hear it, you like *all* women.
The only requirement is that she's breathing.
And in a pinch, you know a little CPR.

PORTES

Ouch!

JEWELS

I felt the chill on that one.

PORTES
(to Jewels)

Thanks a lot, man. I know who she got that from.

JEWELS
(laughing)
Yeah I talked about you. You my boy, but you know I talked about you.

EXT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - FRONT OF MANAGEMENT OFFICE - EVENING.

Lavender POV
of Rippy talking with a group of tenants.

RIPPY

I heard the police found a bug in the bedroom. That's how he caught her. I told you he would. Caught her red-handed.

TENANT
(laughing)
Yeah, with her pants down you could say.

EXT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - PARKING LOT - EVENING.

Lavender's POV
of Dunbar getting into his car and driving away.

Lavender remains seated in his car thinking.

Pugh's POV
of Lavender seated in his car.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM- EVENING.
Lavender discusses a plan with Denise.

LAVENDER

I been thinking of how I can turn things around a little, how I can get some leverage here.

DENISE

I think it would be better if you
left things alone, didn't do anything.
There's no way they could find out
you the one planted the bug. You
used gloves so they don't have
any fingerprints.

LAVENDER

That's just it - I don't remember if I
was wearing the gloves that time.

DENISE

If your fingerprints were on that bug,
you would of heard from the police
by now, believe me.

LAVENDER

Not necessarily. My prints not on
file anywhere, so what would they
compare them to?
(pause) Dunbar's gonna remember that I
was up in his apartment that evening,
in that bedroom fixing the closet door.
He's gonna remember that I was the
only one who could've put that bug there.
And when he mentions that to the police,
then they gonna take my prints and
compare the prints they found on the bug.

DENISE

That man's got so much on his mind.
His wife just got killed. Probably his
whole world is crazy right now.
And the police suspect him of doing
it. When is he gonna have time to
even think about you going up to
fix some closet door. Plus anyway
if he remembers, he's gonna say to
himself "Lavender would've had no reason
to plant a bug in my bedroom - so it could no
have been him." I mean after all Ricky,
no sane person would even dream you would
actually be bugging people's apartments to
get dirt on them to write some stupid book.
Who but you would think up something so

utterly ridiculous?

LAVENDER

He's gonna remember I tell you. Maybe not tomorrow. Maybe not the next day. But when the smoke clears, when things calm down a bit, he's gonna remember. No probably when the police really start to put the screws to him. He's gonna be looking for somebody else to put the blame on, cause he didn't do it. I know that. And if somehow they prove I put the bug there, I don't know what could happen. They might even think I had something to do with murdering her.

DENISE

Wait Ricky, you losing your head now. First of all, how do you know the husband didn't do it?

LAVENDER

He had drove away minutes before she went off that terrace. I saw him. He could not have been driving in his car and throwing her off the terrace at the same time. No way.

DENISE

He could not have come back into the building from the back door.

LAVENDER

No, somehow I don't think so.

DENISE

Ricky, I'm begging you - leave it alone. For once in your life please listen to me.

INT. BAR – NIGHT.

Jewels and Portes talk over drinks.

PORTES

Detective Cherry!

JEWELS

What about her?

PORTES

What a delicious sounding name for such
a sweet thang.

JEWELS

We're not gonna go there, are we?

PORTES

Tell me something. Just how tight are you two
partners?

JEWELS

We are gonna go there?

PORTES

There's a question on the table.

JEWELS

We're as close as two partners should be..

PORTES

Translation -- you ain't hittin it!

JEWELS

Can we do an off-limits on this one?

PORTES

There's something about her, dawg.

JEWELS

Can we do an off-limits on this one?
I've never asked you for anything in the past,
right? Never got in your Kool-Aid, right?
Give me this.

PORTES

Why is she so important to you? What are you
not telling me?

JEWELS

Vince, you know with the ladies you got the
attention span of a toddler. And when the
smoke clears, I'll be the one having to take
the heat - dodging bullets 24 - 7 about how
all men are dogs. I got to work with this woman,
okay. So if you not gonna come correct with her,
please don't come at all.

PORTES

Hey, Word! We're here!

INT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - DAY.

Lavender's POV
of Rippy busy talking to Cherry and Jewels.

RIPPY

I'm not surprised. I knew he was
gonna ketch her sooner or later.
I was just saying that the other day.

CHERRY

So what time you normally get
in?

RIPPY

Oh the time varies. I have various
business ventures I attend to so I
uh (clears throat) tend to work
unusual hours.

CHERRY

How long you lived here?

RIPPY

Seven years.

CHERRY

So you know people around here
pretty well.

RIPPY

Some people yes. Others no. See some
of these people have they nose so
far in the air they can smell next week.
And see I don't travel in they circles.
I'm not a professional. The way they see
it I don't have a college education and
letters after my name so I'm not in they
league.

CHERRY

So how you afford to be here?

RIPPY

The Lottery. I hit big bout nine
years ago. I think that's what burns
sum of them the most - I can live like
they do, but I don't have to work for it.

INT. DUNBAR APARTMENT - DOORWAY - NIGHT.

LAVENDER

Mr.Dunbar we need to talk.
I have a way for you to get out
of this mess you're in.

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Pugh suspiciously exits an apartment and leaves down the back stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. DUNBAR APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT.

DUNBAR
(getting up)

I'm calling the police right now.

LAVENDER

Uh Mr.Dunbar let me tell you why
you're not gonna do that.
(pause) You're not gonna blow the
whistle on me because I'm the only
one who knows you didn't kill your
wife.

Dunbar still moves towards the phone.

DUNBAR

What good is it? You can't tell
the police who did.

LAVENDER

But I can give them a reasonable doubt
that it was you.

Dunbar reaches for the phone.

DUNBAR

They already have doubts. That's
why they're still investigating.

LAVENDER

Yeah and what you think they investigating?
Far as they concerned, they got they
killer. They just looking for more
evidence to clinch it. Make it airtight.

Dunbar stops.

(continuing)

They burying you man, right now. And
I'm trying to hand you a shovel. It's a
small one, but it is one just the same.
And it is all you got.

DUNBAR

You sure you're not just trying
to save yourself?

LAVENDER

I was hoping to save both of us.

INT. CAPTAIN'S BEACH HOUSE – NIGHT.

The preceint personnel are gathered at Prichard's new beach house for a housewarming party.

PRICHARD

Isn't is ironic when relatives are worth
more to you dead than alive?

The guests admire the house as they look around.

GUEST #1

Nice crib!

GUEST #2

The only thing my uncle ever left me was a
Dalmatian who ate his weight in food.

Jewel's POV

of Portes and Cherry laughing and playing in the pool.

INT. MANAGEMENT BUILDING – EARLY MORNING.

Lavender is standing in the hallway just outside the staff's locker room calling Det.Cherry over a burner cell.

(b.g.) MEN TALKING. LOCKER DOORS CLANGING.

LAVENDER

Hello. Could I speak to Det. Cherry?

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION – EARLY MORNING.

CHERRY

Cherry speaking. Who's this?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY – EARLY MORNING.

LAVENDER

That's not really important. I have some information about the death of Jill Dunbar.

CHERRY

I'm listening. What can you tell me?

LAVENDER

Lee Dunbar didn't kill his wife.

CHERRY

(o.c.)

Well who did?

LAVENDER

I don't know, but I know it wasn't him.

CHERRY

(o.c.)

And you know this because you were there?

LAVENDER

In a way I was.

CHERRY

What you mean by that?

LAVENDER

Let me just tell you what happened
that night.

CHERRY

Please continue.

LAVENDER

Well Griffith - you know the mailman-
and Mrs.Dunbar were uh busy. She
thought the husband was gonna be
away for the night, but he came
back early. I saw him get out of his
car and head towards the building.
I knew it was on then.

CHERRY

Excuse me, where did you say you
was when you saw Dunbar get out of
his car?

LAVENDER

I didn't say, but nice try.

CHERRY

Well how did you know what was going on in the bedroom?

LAVENDER

I can't explain that either.

CHERRY

Okay so Dunbar's out of his car and on his way up to the apartment. What then?

LAVENDER

Then he catches them. He didn't say much to Griffith. Just told him to get the hell out and he did. Then Dunbar slaps his wife a couple of times and yells and turns over some furniture - you know.

CHERRY

Yeah, yeah then what happened?

LAVENDER

Then I guess he realizes he's got to get away from his wife before he really hurts her; so he leaves, gets in his car and drives off in a big hurry.

CHERRY

Uh where was his car parked?

LAVENDER

South grounds lot.

CHERRY

The wife was still alive when he drove off?

LAVENDER

Yes she was.

CHERRY

How do you know? I mean did you see her?

LAVENDER

She was still alive, I tell you. I know what I'm talking about.

CHERRY

So what did you see after that?

LAVENDER

Well like I say, he drives off and it had to be more than 15 - 20 minutes later when the wife comes falling off the terrace.

CHERRY

You didn't see the husband come back at any time?

LAVENDER

No not until a long time later when the police was removing the woman's body.

CHERRY

You didn't see him again 'til then?

LAVENDER

That's right.

CHERRY

Okay sir let's go over this again
slower.

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - MORNING.

PRICHARD

You believe him?

CHERRY

Yeah I do. I never really believed
Dunbar killed his wife, not from
the beginning.

JEWELS

Did anyone consider maybe, just
maybe, Dunbar had one of his friends
call you to throw us off the track.

CHERRY

No, I don't think so.

JEWELS

Think about it. Where could this guy
have been watching from to have such
a clear view of everything he claimed he
saw?... Saw and heard? Think about it.

CHERRY

I don't know. Maybe if he had a telescope
or something.

JEWELS

Remember we both looked out that bedroom window. It faces the highway and the river. Nobody could've been looking in from out there.

CHERRY

It could've been a neighbor. The guy knew everybody's name. But what gets me is thing she was describing - I mean where could he have been to be able to see and *hear* those things he said he did ?

JEWELS

Or it could've been somebody just making it all up.

CHERRY

No, I don't think so. You know why we was talking, I kept hearing this loud clanging sound in the background and a lot of people talking.

PRICHARD

Could you place the sound?

CHERRY

No, but I'm certain I've heard it before.

INT. DUNBAR APARTMENT - DOORWAY - DAY.

Lavender has just arrived at Dunbar's.

LAVENDER

They told me you wanted to see me.

DUNBAR

Yeah I wanted to find out how the
call went.

Dunbar is depressed and drinking heavily.

LAVENDER

It went fine. I told you try not to
worry. And it's not a good idea
we be seen together too much.

DUNBAR

Oh yeah, right.
(moving towards bar)
Want a drink?

LAVENDER

Uh no, it's a little early in the day
for me, thanks.

DUNBAR

Yeah, I remember when it use to
be for me too. Now anytime is
the right time.

LAVENDER

I can just imagine how you must feel
with what happened to your wife and
everything. I never got the chance to tell
you how really sorry I am. It's a shame
somebody could do something like
that.

DUNBAR

Yeah it is a shame, isn't it? But then that
would fit in nicely with everything else
going on right now. My whole life's a
shame or is the word *sham*. Probably a
little of both.

LAVENDER

I'm sorry; I don't get you.

DUNBAR

Doesn't matter.

LAVENDER

Except for you losing your wife, you got it made, man. All you people living here got it made. I know it sounds corny but you living proof of the American dream come true.

DUNBAR

It's more like we've *been* made. We're all like little puppets pulled by strings. Like little monkeys dressed up in our monkey suits. Never let them see you sweat. Always every hair in place. Prisoners of our precious reputations and our precious jobs.

LAVENDER

Excuse me, but I look around here and I can't help feeling proud somebody Black can afford all this. Even if all your cars and shit weren't fully paid for, a man like me could only dream of being able to even run up a debt like that and know some day I'd die without still owing it.

DUNBAR

Lavender, you ever wonder why this whole place was built on a hill?

LAVENDER

No, not really. Why??

DUNBAR

It's so we can look down on everyone else
 and they can look up at us. It's to remind
 us *and* the outsiders that we're special,
 that whatever and whoever is up here
 should be set apart from the rest.
 We're on display. Don't you see?
 Patterson's tenants aren't sellouts.
 That would be too easy an adjective.
 (pause) Let me ask you something,
 -- what do you think about a man, a
 Black man, who lets his wife blatantly
 cheat on him and doesn't throw her
 out because he's afraid of the scandal?
 And then the irony of course is -
 she gets herself killed and the man is
 blamed and there's a scandal *anyway*.
 (pause) You see, *to make it* as you say,
 you don't have to actually give up your pride
 or sell your soul. You just have to be willing
 to let them waste away, little by little - bit by bit.
 That's the compromise.

LAVENDER

I hear what you saying; but for once in my
 life I just want a piece of the pie.
 (pause) Or at least I thought I did.

DUNBAR

Be very careful what you ask for Lavender.
 You might just get it.

INT. POLICE STATION - JEWELS' AND CHERRY'S DESKS - DAY.

JEWELS

I was surprised to see you here this morning.

CHERRY

I work here.

JEWELS

No I just know you were out late last night.
 You were still at the party when I left so I
 thought you'd be calling in this morning.

CHERRY

No, I'm fine.

JEWELS

If you say so.

CHERRY

Okay, you want to tell me what this is about?

JEWELS

What?

CHERRY

You obviously have something to say or *ask*. So go ahead.

JEWELS

No I don't.

CHERRY

Yes, you do and the sooner you get it off your chest, the sooner we can get back to the issue at hand.

JEWELS

I don't have anything on my chest.
(pause)

I do admit I was a bit shocked last night with what went on in the pool.

CHERRY

What went on in the pool? Swimming?

JEWELS

You know what I mean.

CHERRY

No actually I don't. I went for a swim. So did five other cops who work here.

(pause)

But that's not what's bothering you, is it?
It's my swimming with the one cop who *doesn't* work here that bothers you.

JEWELS

It wouldn't have been so bad if swimming was the only thing that had been going on.

CHERRY

What else was going on?

JEWELS

You know what I mean.

CHERRY

I *really* wish you'd stop saying that,
because I *really* don't know what you mean.
I flunked mind-reading 101 at the Academy.

JEWELS

A lady wouldn't come off that way. Laughing and flirting and teasing a guy she just met.

CHERRY

So now I'm not a lady. And that *guy* you're talking about is your friend. I was just trying to be nice to him.

JEWELS

Exactly how nice did you get? Especially after I left.

CHERRY

You know what, I'm not going there with you.
They say it's not the first comment that starts
the argument. It's the other person's response to it.
So this is me – shutting the fuck up. I suggest you
do the same.

JEWELS

Fine then.

(pause)

I just noticed you've never gone swimming
with me.

CHERRY

There's a lot of things I've never done with you.
Maybe it's because you've never asked.

JEWELS

And if I did?

Jewels's PHONE RINGS.

(continuing)

To be continued.

Cherry gets up from her desk and walks away.

Portes' POV
of Jewels and Cherry from a few feet away.

When Jewels hangs up the phone, Portes walks over.

PORTES

(motioning toward Cherry's desk)

Did I do that?

JEWELS

Yeah.

PORTES
(stepping backwards)

This is me *stepping off*. Hey, we boyz.
I'm not gonna let a woman come between
that, (*grinning*) although with her I'm sure as hell
tempted. But seriously you need to take a
closer look at how you really feel about
your partner.

JEWELS

She's my partner and my best friend. That's all.

PORTES

Lie to anybody, but yourself, man.

JEWELS

Vince, I'm a three time loser in love, okay.
If I cross that line with Dani and it doesn't
work out, I could lose everything.

PORTES

I don't know. It seems to me you're running that
risk now, dawg.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY.

Cherry and Jewels are exiting a female tenant's apartment after having questioned her.

(b.g..) Lavender is fixing the lock on another tenant's door on that same hallway.

TENANT
(standing in doorway)

Oh detectives, you know what you
were asking me about noticing anything
unusual?

CHERRY

Yes?

ANGLE ON

Lavender pretending to work on the door, but listening.

TENANT

It's probably not important. I feel a little silly even bringing it up..

CHERRY

It's okay, anything you can tell us might be important.

TENANT

Well one of my bedroom windows faces the parking area and I like to look out at night and check on my car - you know before I go to bed. Well recently I've been noticing a car parked by mine. It's a blue car, like a lie-colored powder blue car...

TIGHT ANGLE ON

Lavender getting nervous.

TENANT

(continued)

I mention it because the person who rented that spot moved away a few weeks ago.

CHERRY

How often is the car there ?

TENANT

For awhile it was there just about every night. I never noticed what time the person would come and park it, but it was always there a couple of hours at least. Then if I'd get up in the middle of the night - you know to go to the bathroom- it would be gone. But the funny thing

(continued)
was after Mrs.Dunbar died, I noticed
it wasn't there any more.

CHERRY

After the night she died, you didn't
see it any more?

TENANT

That's right. I think it was there that
night - yes I'm sure it was - and then
after all the excitement, somebody
drove it away and I haven't seen it
since.

ANGLE ON

neighbors down the hall returning from a vacation

NEIGHBORS

(to Tenant)

Hey Mrs.Goodwin.

TENANT

Why you back so soon? I didn't
expect you back for another week.

NEIGHBORS

Yeah we heard about everything that
was going on here and decided to come
back early.

TENANT

(motioning to detectives)

Yes that's exactly what I was just
speaking to these detectives about.

INT. LAVENDER APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

DENISE

Ricky I been thinking - why don't you
go away for a couple of days 'til things

(continued)

cool off about the murder. You got some time coming to you and I could stay here and hold down the fort.

LAVENDER

No that might look suspicious.

DENISE

Why would it look suspicious? Far as they know, you not involved. And it'd be good for you to get away and get things off your mind.

LAVENDER

Dee I'd be too worried to relax or have any fun. Besides I need to stay close to find out what's going on. I need to keep reassuring Dunbar. The man's shaky. (pause) No if I ran away, I'd be going about this the wrong way. I need to run *to* the police, not away from them.

INT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - PARKED CAR - MORNING.

Cherry and Jewels sit parked in their unmarked car, still trying to figure out who could have made that call.

CHERRY

Okay like you said the bedroom window faces the river. I don't get it. Where could this guy have been?

ANGLE ON

Lavender approaching in his car, sees the detectives, and purposely parks right beside them. He lingers in his car.

JEWELS

Who lives over them?

CHERRY

(checks his notes)

Uh the Sinklers. Dan and Joyce Sinkler.
But they've been away on vacation for
the last 2 weeks.

JEWELS

Oh okay. Okay on one side of the
Dunbar apartment is the stairs. On
the other side is the three sisters we
talked to.

CHERRY

How about underneath?

JEWELS

The young couple we talked to -
you remember the wife made the
comment about Dunbar in swimming
trunks.

CHERRY

Oh yeah, I remember.

(noticing Lavender's car)

Billy? (motioning) Powder Blue Car.

Lavender gets out of his car. The detectives get out of theirs.

CHERRY

Excuse me, uh Lavender isn't it?

LAVENDER

Yeah, how you officers coming along
with the case?

CHERRY

It's coming.

LAVENDER

You know I was here that night?

CHERRY

(taking out his notebook)

Were you?

LAVENDER

Yeah, I was parked here and I happened to look up and see the woman falling down from the terrace.

JEWELS

Why didn't you report this?

LAVENDER

Well I heard you guys were busy talking to everybody around here, so I knew sooner or later you'd get around to me.

CHERRY

So you say you was parked here?

LAVENDER

Yeah after work I do a lot of odd jobs for the tenants. I pick up a lot of bills that way. I got 2 kids in school - you know how that is.

CHERRY and JEWELS

Yeah.

LAVENDER

So when I finish I usually pull on out for home. If I'm real sleepy, I might doze a few minutes so

(continued)

I don't fall asleep on the road,
but that's about it.

CHERRY

So you say you do this a lot.

LAVENDER

Well a lot of lately. Seem like everybody
got something that needs fixing.

CHERRY

Yeah.

LAVENDER

My wife complains about the late
hours, but hell we got to eat.

CHERRY and JEWELS

Yeah.

LAVENDER

But seriously you guys, whenever
I see those cop shows on TV, the
main thing they do when there's a
murder is check out everybody who
could've had a motive to kill the person.

CHERRY

Why, do you know somebody who
had a motive?

LAVENDER

Well have you guys thought about the
mailman's wife? She had a motive.

CHERRY

You think so, huh?

LAVENDER

Hell yeah. If I was you, I'd get a picture of the wife and show it to some of the neighbors. Couldn't hurt.

CHERRY

Yeah you might have something there.

ANGEL ON

a man anxiously approaching.

MAN

Excuse me detectives, my apartment was burglarized last night. I reported it, but nobody in the office seems to be doing anything. Can you help me, please?

INT. MANAGEMENT BLDG. - MORNING.

Cherry and Jewels have accompanied the man to the management office, spoken to the appropriate party and are now on their way out.

CHERRY

You think these burglaries might tie in with the murder at all?

JEWELS

Nah, just a coincidence.

CHERRY

But you do realize these got to be inside jobs?

JEWELS

Yeah, no forced entry. The perp had a key. The people were always away on vacation.

As they pass the mens' locker room...

(b.g.) CLANGING SOUND from the mens' lockers.

ANGLE ON

Cherry as he recognizes the sound

CHERRY

(to Jewels)

That's it!

JEWELS

That's what?

CHERRY

That's the sound I heard in the background when that guy called me.

INT. POLICE STATION – CAPTAIN'S OFFICE – NIGHT.

PRICHARD

Well gentlemen this case seems to be getting more interesting by the minute. One new development after another. Whatever happened to the mailman's wife? Did she ever come up with a real alibi?

CHERRY

No, but we have nothing to place
her at the scene.

JEWELS

Well we might get something if
we followed that guy's advice -
what's his name - Lavender?

CHERRY

Yeah maybe.

Another detective sticks his head into the office.

PRICHARD

Hey Marty, what's doing?

DETECTIVE

(to Cherry and Jewels)

Something just came over the wire about
that Patterson Towers place.

CHERRY

What??

DETECTIVE

One of the tenants just shot a guy
breaking into their apartment.

CHERRY

What??

DETECTIVE

Yeah, I thought you might want to go
check it out.

INT. NEIGHBORS' APARTMENT - NIGHT.

This apartment is occupied by the couple who returned early from their vacation. An ambulance attendant is attending to the husband's head injury while both the husband and wife are being questioned by a detective. Cherry goes over to look at the burglar's body lying on the floor.

ANGLE ON

PUGH's face.

CHERRY

Hey I've seen this guy around here before.

HUSBAND

Yeah he works here - well use to work here. His name is Pugh.

' Cherry takes out a handkerchief , reaches down and picks up a MASTER KEY lying beside the body.

CHERRY

Well now, will you look at this.

Jewels comes over to see.

JEWELS

Well this explains a lot.

WIFE

Officers, I didn't mean to kill him. I was trying to keep him from hurting us .

HUSBAND

He woke us up. I came out here from the bedroom to see what was going on and he hit me from behind.

WIFE

Then I shot him. It was so dark I couldn't see who it was.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING.

The Lavenders, including Tosha and Martin, are rushing around getting ready to leave for the day.

LAVENDER

Dee Aunt Sophie called last night.

DENISE

Oh yeah?

LAVENDER

Yeah, and she said she hadn't heard from you in a couple of months.

DENISE

Oh yeah.

LAVENDER

I thought you said you and her went shopping bout a week or two ago.

DENISE

When?

LAVENDER

You know, the night the Dunbar woman got killed.

DENISE

Oh no that was Sophie from the office.

INT. PATTERSON MANAGEMENT OFFICE - LOCKERROOM - MORNING.

Cherry, Jewels and the management supervisors are gathered around Pugh's locker as the two detectives go through his belongings. Cherry is looking through a small address type book.

CHERRY
(to Jewels)
Now would you look at this.

CLOSE ON
list of various apartments Pugh robbed.

JEWELS

Oh Oh.

CHERRY

Do you see what I see?

JEWELS

Yeah.

CHERRY

I do believe we just found Mrs.Dunbar's
killer. And what do you know, it ain't the
husband.

JEWELS

Yeah I know. Don't rub it in.

CHERRY

God, I just love it when I'm right.

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY.

PRICHARD

So what, she surprised him in the act?

CHERRY

Yeah, he hit her. He thought he had killed her. He panicked. He threw her off the terrace, hoping it would look like a suicide or something.

JEWELS

But that wasn't the guy's MO.
He always hit the apartment when the people were away.

CHERRY

Earlier that evening he probably saw the husband with the suitcase and figured he *and the wife* were gonna be away at least for the night and he could make his move. But the wife stayed home and when he came in, she surprised him. That's what happened with this other couple. They just came back early from the vacation and he hadn't counted on that happening.

JEWELS

Shit I never would've figured that.

PRICHARD

Well lucky for Dunbar or that could've been his ass.

CHERRY

And I just thought of another thing-
Pugh must've made that call from the phone booth outside the lockerroom.

JEWELS

Why??

CHERRY

I don't know. Must've been to help the husband or somehow throw us off track.

PRICHARD

Why would he care about helping the husband - as long as we wasn't getting close to him?

CHERRY

I don't know. People around there all said they was shocked cause he was such a nice little guy - you know aside from being a thief. Maybe he felt guilty and didn't want the husband to do down for something he did.

JEWELS

A crook with a conscience.
He didn't feel guilty enough to stop hitting the apartments I noticed.

CHERRY

Well you know, what can I say?
It'd gotten good to him.

PRICHARD

Who planted the bug?

JEWELS

Probably a blackmailer, like you thought.
But it doesn't matter, now.

INT. CHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Cherry is home alone for the evening.

DOORBELL RINGS.

She opens the door and Jewels is standing there holding a cake with a lit candle in the shape of the number 5.

JEWELS

Happy Anniversary, partner.

CHERRY

Happy Anniversary.

Entering, Jewels sits the cake down onto a table. With both leaning over the table, they blow out the candle together and then pause.

JEWELS

There's about ten good reasons why this shouldn't happen. But at this moment to save my life, I can't think of one.

CHERRY

I can't either.

He pulls her towards him and they kiss passionately.

INT. LAVENDER'S APARTMENT BUILDING – LOBBY – MAILBOX – NIGHT.

Lavender is getting the day's mail. He happens to open the telephone bill (LAN LINE service) and seeing the amount is high, browses through the itemized charges.

CLOSE ON

a particular number dialed twice on the same evening.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT.

Lavender takes out the RED PHONE BOOK and compares the number on the bill to the number he has for the Dunbars. It's the same.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT – LIVINGROOM – NIGHT.

Lavender sits alone watching the TV News Broadcast of the Dunbar Murder. The police have concluded that "Philip Pugh", a maintenance man at the Patterson Hill Towers Apartments, had secured a Master Key and was burglarizing the tenants' apts. while they were away on their summer vacations. Thinking the Dunbars would be out of town, he entered their unit on that night and was surprised by Mrs. Dunbar. He fought with her, causing her to fall and strike her head against a livingroom coffee table. She was just knocked unconscious; but Pugh fearing she was dead,

panicked and threw her off the 17th floor terrace in an apparent attempt to make the death look like a suicide or accident.

Lavender turns off the TV, but remains sitting quietly and thinking.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lavender is tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep.

DENISE

What's the matter, can't you sleep?

LAVENDER

There's just something not right about this.

DENISE

Not right about what? Ricky, your co-worker did it. Face it. It's not like the guy meant to do it. It was an accident.

LAVENDER

It's just something wrong about this whole thing. I can't put my finger on it, but there's something wrong.

DENISE

Ricky, leave it alone. The case is closed. The police are satisfied. They got their killer. Nobody loses - not even Pugh cause he's dead anyway.

INT. PATTERSON GROUNDS - DAY.

Rippy has his usual audience, including Lavender.

RIPPY

Okay, so I was wrong. I got to admit I was shocked. I didn't think that little man had it in him. Why just that same day, we was

(continued)
all standing here talking, - Dunbar too
(to Lavender)
and you was selling him some perfume
or something.

LAVENDER

That's right, *I was*, wasn't I. That's it!

INT. PATTERSON MANAGEMENT OFFICE - LOCKERROOM - DAY.

Lavender rummages through Pugh's locker and takes out the bottle of cologne he sold him the day of the murder.

INT. LAVENDERS' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Lavender is searching through that entire pile of old newspapers Denise has saved.

CLOSE ON

all the Dunbar murder stories.

Denise arrives home.

DENISE

Hi. How long you been home?

LAVENDER
(quietly)

Not long.

DENISE
(noticing newspapers)

What you doing now?

LAVENDER

I've been sitting here going through every newspaper since the night Jill Dunbar was killed. I've read every story, every headline about the murder and nowhere do they say anything about whether or not she was wearing makeup when she died.

DENISE

Yeah so? What you talking about?

LAVENDER

That night you laughed and you said
 something that's stuck in the back of
 my mind all this time. You said you
 could tell Jill Dunbar was the type
 of woman who wouldn't be caught
 dead without her makeup on - and
 that's exactly how she was caught.

DENISE

Ricky, what's this all about? Is
 there a point you trying to make?

LAVENDER

Dee, why did you kill that woman?

DENISE

Are you out of your mind? I don't
 believe what you just said to me.
 Your co-worker killed that woman.
 That Pugh guy.

LAVENDER

No he didn't. He would not have gone in
 that apt. that night.

(holding up cologne)

That same day I sold him this
 bottle of cologne and me and him
 and Dunbar was standing there talking
 and Dunbar said he was the only one
 going away that night - that his wife would
 be home so I could go on up and fix
 that closet door.

DENISE

So?

LAVENDER

So he knew that apt. wasn't gonna
be empty, so he would not have went in.
With all the other robberies, he always
did it when he knew the people wouldn't be
home. Everytime. The same M.O..
Everytime. Even the police said
so.

DENISE

So he forgot the man said his wife would
be home.

LAVENDER

He would not have forgot a thing like that.
(pause)
You killed her, Dee. That's the
only explanation...
The only explanation for you knowing
she didn't have on any makeup when
she went off that terrace...
The only explanation for why you
lied and said you were late that night
because you was with Aunt Sophia...

DENISE

I told you, you misunderstood me. It
was a girl I work with.

LAVENDER

No, Dee. That night you said you
went shopping with Aunt Sophia.

DENISE

Oh this is insane.

LAVENDER

(placing phone bill on table)

And it's the only explanation for the two
phone calls to the Dunbar house that
night. I didn't make them.

Denise becomes silent.

DENISE

Listen Ricky, this is crazy. I'm
your wife. You know me. This is
all some big mistake.

LAVENDER

Just tell me why you did it.

DENISE

Ricky, no.

LAVENDER

Why did you kill that woman? You
didn't even know her.

DENISE

I don't know what you're talking
about.

LAVENDER

(screaming)

Don't lie to me, Dee. You killed
that woman. Why? Just tell me why.

DENISE

(quietly)

I asked you to leave it alone, didn't I?
I begged you. But you just couldn't,
could you? You never know when to
stop. You just have to keep digging. Digging.
It was a mistake, dammit, a big
mistake...(pause) When you kept
coming in all those late hours, I
thought you was sleeping with her and
when I called her, I was trying to tell
her to stay away from my husband.
Well she made it clear she was
gonna keep seeing you...(pause)
Only it wasn't *you* she was talking

(continued)

about. It wasn't until later I realized she was talking about that mailman. She thought I was *his* wife and I was calling to tell her to stay away from *him*. Big mistake, huh?...(pause) So when she hung up on me the second time, I went over to the apartment to convince her I meant business. (pause) Do you know that slut actually let me in because I threatened to make a scene outside her door? She was *that* concerned about what the neighbors thought. (pause) I didn't mean to kill her. I didn't go there planning to do that. She wasn't worth going to jail for. I just told her if she didn't stay away from my husband, she'd be sorry. And she asked me what did I think I could do about it, so I hit her and she fell backwards and hit her head and there was blood and I thought she was dead so I dragged her over to the terrace and threw her over. I was hoping everybody would think she fell over by accident or something. I don't know. Everything happened so fast.

LAVENDER

This whole thing is a nightmare.

DENISE

The woman was a slut. She was dirt.

LAVENDER

You took that woman's life, for nothing.

DENISE

I had a right to try and protect what's mine. So now you know the truth, what you going to do?

LAVENDER

I don't know, Dee. You always saying you
can read me like a book. Why don't
you tell me.

FADE TO BLACK.